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Introduction

IT ALL BEGAN the morning of April 28, 1997, with an unexpected telephone call: the host of a radio talk show—the Chuck Harder Program, to be exact—wished to know whether I would join Fr. Malachi Martin in a discussion on topics of mutual interest. Needless to say, I happily agreed; and when the phone rang again an hour later, the three of us were “on the air.” The following day I wrote to Fr. Martin, and thus began a two-year correspondence extending into June of 1999, the month before his death.

But why should this exchange be of interest to the general reader? What, specifically, does it contain that is new? A comment by Malachi Martin, dropped in the course of the aforementioned interview, encapsulates the answer. We had been discussing the new horizons opened by science in the course of the twentieth century—vistas undreamed-of right up to their discovery—when the question was raised to what extent Thomism enables us to interpret these new findings, to render them ontologically comprehensible. Fr. Martin replied that to integrate these discoveries into a coherent worldview, Thomistic philosophy alone might not suffice, that in fact “we really need a new Thomas Aquinas.” Now these words interested me immensely, all the more since I had recently completed a book in which I prove, with full rigor, that Thomistic principles suffice to dispel the quandaries of quantum physics, the enigma of so-called quantum paradox.¹ At the time, however, I was in the process of completing a paper² on another aspect of quantum theory: the phenomenon termed “nonlocality” namely, which had been predicted by a now-famous theorem of quantum physics discovered by John Stewart Bell and was subsequently verified.

¹ *The Quantum Enigma*, first published in 1995 and republished by Angelico Press in 2011.

² “Bell’s Theorem and the Perennial Ontology” (*Sophia*, 1997), republished in *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Misconceptions* (Angelico Press, 2015).

What this result affirms in effect is that *the universe, in its entirety, transcends the bounds of Einsteinian space and time*—a finding Berkeley physicist Henry Stapp refers to as “the most profound discovery of science”! Now, what especially struck me is the fact that this so-called “nonlocality” entails the existence of an ontological stratum well-known to the sapiential traditions of mankind—from the Vedic to the Hermetic and the Platonist—but *virtually unrecognized in the Thomistic*. Not that Thomistic philosophy denies the existence of such an ontological realm, but rather that Scholastic tradition in general has little to say on that subject, and in any case does not give us to understand the enormity of its significance. For this one must have recourse to other traditions, to teachings in fact that have long been impugned by our pundits as “primitive superstitions” and rejected out of hand. And so I came to realize, by way of Bell’s theorem, that we do in fact “need a new Thomas Aquinas,” as Fr. Malachi Martin maintains.

Oddly enough, the topic of the aforesaid ontological stratum—the so-called “intermediary” domain³—came up, as if by chance, in the course of our radio conversation. Knowing that I had critiqued the psychologies of Freud and Jung in my first book,⁴ Malachi Martin threw a question my way pertaining to this subject, in response to which I explained that, contrary to the prevailing opinion, Jung proves to be far more lethal to Christianity than Freud: for whereas Freud rejects religion *per se* as an infantile superstition, Jung claims to have discovered its rationale in his doctrine of what he terms the “collective unconscious.” What he offers, I maintained, as the enlightened or “sci-

³ The second of what Vedic tradition refers to as the *tribhuvana* or “triple world” which constitutes the macrocosmic counterpart of the *soma-psyche-pneuma* or *corpus-anima-spiritus* ternary. That “intermediary” world, named *bhuvar*, constitutes thus an inherently *psychic* realm. In 19th-century occultism it became known as the *astral* plane, and in Orthodox Christianity it is referred to as the *aerial* world and regarded as the abode of demons.

⁴ *Cosmos and Transcendence*, 1984; republished by Angelico Press in 2008.

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entific” religion proves in the end to be an *Ersatz*, a pseudo-religion based precisely on a false identification—the most perilous of all!—of the “intermediary” with the spiritual domain. And so, there it was again: *the intermediary domain!* I am constrained to admit that Malachi Martin was delighted with this analysis pertaining to Carl Jung, which in fact encroaches somewhat upon an area of his own expertise. For it happens that Fr. Martin was well aware of the domain in question—to which he was wont to refer as the “middle plateau”—and had personally contacted that eerie realm innumerable times in his capacity as an exorcist insofar as it constitutes in fact the habitat of the demons with whom he was empowered to converse. But let us get back to “the need for a new Thomas Aquinas”: we have here a second reason why it is incumbent upon us to broaden our ontological horizon—to open doors and windows, if you will, that have long been shut.

Now, an “opening of doors and windows” is of course what progressivists of every stripe have been advocating for a very long time; the problem, however, is that as a rule they have welcomed contemporary misconceptions in place of perennial truth.⁵ What is actually needed is a radically deeper comprehension of the cosmos: the discovery—or rediscovery, to be precise—of ontological strata inaccessible not only to ordinary sense perception, but to the *modus operandi* of contemporary science as well.⁶ It will of course come as a surprise to many that there *are* strata of that kind, let alone that there exist corresponding sciences capable of yielding not only insights of interest to philosophers, but applicable knowledge beneficial to mankind. It could even be argued that whereas our present physical and biological sciences cater primarily to material necessities and wants, the aforementioned

⁵ I have dealt with this subject at length in *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Misconceptions* (Angelico Press, 2015).

⁶ The reader will note that I am not counting Jungian psychology as a bona fide science. It was in fact one of my main objectives in *Cosmos and Transcendence* to expose the most harmful pseudo-sciences of our day.

disciplines encompass benefits answering to higher—that is to say, specifically *human*—needs. What stands at issue are the so-called *traditional* sciences,⁷ which may also be referred to as *sacred* sciences inasmuch as they pertain potentially to the religious quest. It is crucial to note that in these disciplines it is *man*—the scientist himself—who in a way functions as the “scientific instrument”: the microscope or telescope by means of which access to hitherto-uncontacted realms is to be achieved. The enterprise hinges therefore upon the fitness of that instrument, that *corpus-anima-spiritus* compound: its purity, first of all, and its energies—especially those “finer” energies which, in our civilization, are generally squandered in sexual promiscuity. It is not without reason, thus, that the disciples of Pythagoras, for instance, were subject not only to vows of chastity, but to a five-year observance of silence, of non-speaking—something of which we can hardly conceive. But of course, who nowadays understands such things: who is still left in this “brave new world” to whom all this is *not* an “old wife’s tale”!

In certain respects the case for traditional science, I am sorry to say, stands even worse among conservative Catholics: the fact that these sciences are “sacred”—that they constitute, in other words, an adjunct of religion—suffices generally to provoke instant denunciation: “pagan superstition” seems to be the canonical term. Now, I have always regarded such a knee-jerk response as unworthy of a Catholic, as un-*katholikos* in fact. But more to the point: I have invested decades in the exploration of such “pagan superstitions,” not only by way of written sources, but through personal contacts involving half-a-dozen extended sojourns in parts of India and Nepal, for example, where happily our McDonald’s culture had not yet penetrated. And in light of

⁷ The term is descriptive: these sciences are not “invented” or discovered like our own, but *received* in their essence by way of a transmission, and thus lay claim to a “suprahuman” origin. In the language of antiquity, these sciences derive “from the gods,” meaning that they are, ultimately, of *angelic* provenance.

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these investigations I am persuaded that there exists a pre-Christian wisdom of supra-human origin, perpetuated in unbroken chains of transmission from master to disciple—beginning conceivably with Adam himself—vestiges of which can still be found in various parts of the world. I have come to believe, moreover, that the wisdom in question—this veritable *sophia perennis*—is something of which we of the present age stand urgently in need. To put it as succinctly as I can: we have need of a *sacred* science because, collectively, we have succumbed to the spell and dominance of a *profane* science that is running out of control. In the face of this onslaught we stand in truth as helpless as a child, without so much as a clue! Even the highest religion, moreover, will not suffice to neutralize this spell or break that stranglehold; the fact is that we are today encompassed and besieged by “*signs and wonders that could deceive even the elect.*” Science, in the final count, responds to science alone: a lower *de jure* to a higher. Hence the imperative need today for a glimpse, at least, of the traditional or sacred sciences, which perceive the universe, not as a mere aggregate of particles hurrying endlessly and to no purpose through the interminable reaches of space, but precisely as the tripartite macrocosm which in truth it is. The case boils down in principle to this simple fact: *Man, the veritable microcosm, has need of his complement.*⁸ Or simpler still: “A meaningful life is not finally possible in a meaningless world,” as Huston Smith points out.

This brings us back at last to the question with which I began: what is it in my correspondence with Malachi Martin that may be of interest to the general reader? It is first of all to be noted that in this exchange of letters Fr. Martin played a role akin to that of a spiritual director; thus he did not raise topics of his own choosing, but responded to issues I brought up. It needs

⁸ On this question and all that it entails I refer the reader to *Cosmos and Transcendence* (Angelico Press, 2008), and for a glimpse, moreover, into the vistas of traditional science, to the chapter “*Cakra and Planet*” in *Science and Myth* (Angelico Press, 2012).

therefore to be explained why I raised these issues: what motivated me in this exchange. The crucial fact is that I felt inclined from the start to submit my—at times seemingly “unorthodox”—conceptions to the scrutiny of this great man and priest, as to someone qualified to judge and to advise. I was eager, at the same time, to continue the conversation begun in the course of our radio interview. From the start I connected the need for “a new Thomas Aquinas” with the desideratum of an enlarged cosmography: the rediscovery of ontological vistas that put to shame the billions of light-years hypothesized by our astrophysicists. And the first step in this enterprise, I believed, must be the rediscovery of the Vedic *bhuvar*, Fr. Martin’s “middle plateau.” I wanted to share with him my thoughts and intuitions in that regard by way of letters and publications relating to this issue, beginning with the article on Bell’s theorem. It was clear to me that, from an ultra-traditional Catholic point of view, much of this material was suspect, to say the least, and that it would in fact be futile to open my thoughts on such matters to “rank and file” theologians on either side of the contemporary divide. I realized at the same time that parts of what I had to say would in fact be warmly welcomed by aficionados of Vatican II⁹; but let me be absolutely clear: I submit without reservation to the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church, which transcends both the pedantic and at times pharisaical narrowness of the extreme theological right no less than the liberal fantasies and pipe dreams of the left. And it seemed to me from the start that in Malachi Martin I may indeed have found the guide and arbiter I had been looking for: someone endowed with both the breadth of knowledge and depth of insight to judge the Catholicity of the views at which I had arrived.

I will of course let Malachi Martin’s letters speak for themselves. What I wish to point out, above all, is the human kindness

⁹ The major exception being my unequivocal censure of so-called “theistic evolutionism,” that darling of the modernists! On this subject I refer the reader to my book *Theistic Evolution: the Teilhardian Heresy* (Angelic Press, 2012).

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and astounding humility they convey. One finds oneself in the presence not ostensibly of a savant and polymath, an authority in redoubtable disciplines such as Semitic paleography, but of a humble priest profoundly in love with the Crucified. In dealing with theological issues he seems never to leave out of account the impact the doctrines in question may have upon our spiritual life: whether they conduce to piety and unconditional submission to God, or on the contrary, may prove injurious to our soul. At times one has the impression that he leans to this side or that of a theological issue, not on theoretical grounds, but precisely in the interest of our spiritual well-being. This happens in particular when it comes to the central issue of the celebrated debate between Henri de Lubac and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, the question whether there exists in man a “natural disposition for the supernatural”: time and again—and notwithstanding his high esteem for Hans Urs von Balthasar, who took the affirmative position—Malachi Martin responds by citing what he terms “the utter gratuitousness” of the supernatural, the fact that “it came as something alien to my nature in the sense that nothing in my nature or the nature of my cosmos made this invasion inevitable or necessary or even possible....” Yet, even so, he did not pass final judgment on this supremely profound issue, but remained open till the end to the possibility that what he had seemingly denied may yet prove to be true; as he writes a month before his death, “I can wait [on this question] in relative tranquility until I am *facies ad faciem*.”

It is to be clearly understood that Fr. Martin’s reluctance to concede “a natural disposition for the supernatural”—so far from being indicative of an inability to fathom the likes of Henri de Lubac—stems rather from a deep *pastoral* understanding of what this claim entails. More keenly perhaps than any of his peers, Malachi Martin was cognizant of the spiritual blight that ensues invariably from a careless handling of this issue: from an affirmative response, that is, of insufficient depth. The affirmation of a supernatural ingredient in man is either authentically esoteric or it is rank heresy; and the two are separated by a razor’s

edge. Think of Meister Eckhart's *Vüncelin* or "little spark" in each and every human being, said to be *incretatus et increabile*: "uncreated and uncreatable"! My point is that such conceptions are comprehensible to very few, and that their dissemination to the faithful at large is not only uncalled for but dangerous in the extreme; as Clement of Alexandria has put it: "One does not reach a sword to a child."¹⁰ Now I surmise that Malachi Martin understood this better by far than most theologians, and that this explains his repeated references to the utter helplessness and indeed incapacity of fallen man *per se* in relation to the spiritual realms.

To which I will add—at the risk of trying to say too much—that it is one thing to theologize from the comparative comfort zone of *this* world, and quite another after one has experienced so much as a whiff of the supernatural. Now, in the case of Malachi Martin there can be no doubt in that regard: this priest is no ivory-tower theoretician, no mere *peritus* displaying his theological wares, but a battle-tested soldier of Christ, whose agonies and ecstasies are known to God alone. I have stood in that small room in upper Manhattan—which looks out upon a wall—where for so many years he worked and slept, prayed and said Mass, read avidly and wrote his masterful treatises; and it is all I needed to see.

As to his overall mission, I perceive Malachi Martin as arguably the providential historian of the Catholic Church in our time, whose task it was to bring to light and record for posterity what has actually taken place, much of it "behind closed doors." It was for this that he became at first a Jesuit "insider," the right-hand man of Cardinal Bea no less, and later embraced a mode of life which afforded him the freedom to write without constraint. It is to Malachi Martin that we owe major historical revelations, not the least of which is the disclosure of a Black Mass celebrated inside the Vatican days following the election of Pope Paul VI, an

¹⁰ I have dealt with the delicate issue of "esoterism" at length in *Christian Gnosis* (Angelico Press, 2008).

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event which seems to have profoundly affected the course of history. Fr. Martin, clearly, was under no illusions regarding the present state of the Catholic Church.¹¹ He tells us in fact—repeatedly and in unequivocal terms—that in its outward forms and structures it is presently undergoing a near-dissolution: it is “going to entombment,” to put it in his own words.

This brings me at last to my final point: apart from whatever human interest Malachi Martin’s letters may hold and the light they may cast upon this great man, their paramount significance, it seems to me, resides in the fact that they bear witness to the Church, not only as it was, but also—and especially—*as it shall be*. He seems to have his eye as much on the future as on the past, and gives us to understand that whereas the essential truths of our Catholic faith need of course to be preserved, there are extraneous elements to be shed and artificial boundaries to be razed. Surely all that is orthodox will be found again in the Church that is even now silently forming beneath the rubble of the present disintegration; yet that Church-to-come will doubtless be freed from limitations of outlook and idiosyncrasies endemic to this or that era, as also from the autocracy of any particular theological style: for example, of Thomism as we generally conceive of it. And this explains not only why “we really need a new Thomas Aquinas,” but also puts in perspective Malachi Martin’s affirmative response to the various “foreign” doctrines with which I confronted him, beginning with the teachings of Jacob Boehme, the seventeenth-century visionary who in the opinion of some has “Christianized” the alchemical wisdom pertaining to the Hermetic tradition. It explains why Malachi Martin could embrace such “suspect” doctrines with unfeigned joy and palpable enthusiasm, and enables us to understand how this faithful servant of the Roman Catholic Church and loyal son of Sanctus Pater

¹¹ On this subject I would highly recommend the eight interviews with Malachi Martin conducted by Bernard Janzen (available in both CD and booklet form from Triumph Communications, P.O. Box 479, Davidson, SK S0G 1A0, Canada), beginning perhaps with *Catholicism Overturned*.

Ignatius could write of this German mystic: “Cobbler and Lutheran he may have been by a so-called ‘accident’ of personal history, but surely Christ bent over him at the midnight of his personal travail...” In place of the customary references, open or veiled, to “pagan superstitions,” we encounter in these magnificent words—which in fact echo what Boehme himself reveals regarding “the midnight of his travail”¹²—the perfect receptivity of a mind and heart purified in the Blood of Christ. And who can doubt that this priest speaks, even now, for the Church that is to come!

¹² As in midst of a raging storm “I lay on the mountain near midnight”—so Boehme begins his account—“and the Antichrist opened wide his jaws to devour me”: at that moment “the holy Virgin Sophia came to comfort me.” Here is the passage in full: “*Als ich lag am Berge gegen Mitternacht, und alle Bäume über mich fielen, und alle Sturm-Winde über mich gingen, und der Antichrist seinen Rachen gegen mir aufsperrte mich zu verschlingen, kam Sie (die heilige Jungfrau Sophia) mir zu Trost, und vermählte sich mit mir.*” See Franz von Baader, *Ausgewählte Schriften zum androgynen Menschenbild* (Bensheim: Telesma Verlag, 1991), p. 4.

I

Enter Jacob Boehme

April 29, 1997

Dear Father Martin,

I need not tell you that I have greatly enjoyed our telephone conversation yesterday.¹ Let me just say that it was for me a rare pleasure and a great privilege.

We touched briefly on the question of the “middle plateau.” Permit me to share with you some thoughts on that subject which have occupied me for some time. I have tried, without much success, to obtain relevant information from “standard” Christian sources. The most explicit references, it appears, are to be found in the Orthodox literature, which, as you know, refers to this domain as the “aerial” realm. The term itself, of course, is very suggestive; but unfortunately the authors in question treat of the subject mainly from a “pastoral” point of view which does not address the ontological issues that especially interest me. They perceive the aerial world as an intermediary realm to be crossed after death. It is here, as you know, that the so-called “toll-houses” are situated, which appear to be the Orthodox equivalent, more or less, of Purgatory in the Catholic sense. Well, this is all of the utmost importance from a religious standpoint, but fails to provide the kind of “ontological” explication I seek as a scientist or philosopher.

I did however, quite unexpectedly, come upon what I deem to be a major clue. For some time I have interested myself in the doctrine of Jacob Boehme. I don’t know whether you will agree with me, but I surmise that it is here, precisely, that Christianity has given birth to a bona fide cosmology. Even as St. Thomas Aquinas has “Christianized” the metaphysics of Aristotle, so has Boehme, it seems to me, Christianized the “Hermetic” wisdom

¹ The reference is to a telephone conversation following the radio interview, as mentioned in the Introduction.

of mankind.² I would add that Boehme was definitely not a Protestant; his doctrine is diametrically opposed to the ideas of Luther. But let me get to the immediate point, the “major clue”: Boehme maintains that the creation described in the first chapters of Genesis is not the original *ex nihilo* creation, but constitutes rather a restoration, one could say, of the world or kingdom of Lucifer, which had been in a sense destroyed—but not altogether annihilated—by his Fall. Boehme makes it a point to maintain that the remains of Lucifer’s kingdom and *our* world are situated “in the same place”—which seems to imply that the latter is somehow “superimposed” upon the first. It suggests, in other words, that the ruins of Lucifer’s realm exist to this day “underneath” the corporeal domain in which we find ourselves, like some primordial paleontological stratum deeply submerged beneath the earth. Now, this would explain many things, beginning with the notion—so much emphasized in Orthodox Christian sources—that the aerial realm or “middle plateau” is indeed the habitat of demons. And it would moreover lend credence, I believe, to the ontological interpretation of Bell’s theorem³ I have proposed in a lecture (the published version of which I enclose) to the effect that the corporeal domain differs from the intermediary by the imposition of *quantitative* constraints, in accordance with the Biblical verse: “*He set His compass upon the face of the deep.*” It is, perhaps, as if God wanted to stabilize a world that had grown dangerously amorphous by virtue of having become dis-

² In keeping with the “mercurial” nature of its mythical ancestry, it is quite impossible to give a succinct and univocal characterization of what has been termed the *Hermetic* tradition (or philosophy or science), which in its historical manifestations encompasses a bewildering jumble of writings ranging literally from the authentically sublime to the wildly absurd. Leaving aside this welter of ideas, what I broach here as a subject for discussion is precisely the “Christianized” version or doctrine expounded by Jacob Boehme, which Malachi Martin, as we shall see, characterizes in his response as “a pre-Christian Christological knowledge.”

³ See “Bell’s Theorem and the Perennial Ontology” in *Ancient Wisdom and Modern Misconceptions*.

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connected from its spiritual source or prototype. From this point of view, the danger and indeed the trial of the intermediary domain lies in the fact that there one has been set free from the providential constraints of this, our corporeal world, but not yet entered upon the spiritual: not yet been subjected to the “law of God,” which is really to enter into the “glorious liberty” of the beatified.

I have said enough, perhaps, to indicate to you the general direction of my thought. Let me just add that the lecture on “Bell’s theorem” was given soon after I had begun to think seriously of “the quantum enigma,” and needs to be slightly revised in light of subsequent recognitions. The final paper will soon appear. I am also enclosing my review of an interesting book by a nuclear physicist concerning the cosmology of Jacob Boehme.⁴ Yes, I do agree that we need “a new St. Thomas Aquinas” as you have so well said.

One thing more. It means much to me to know that in your charity you will remember me in your prayers. I too, Father, will gladly remember you in mine.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Wolfgang

⁴ Basarab Nicolescu, *Meaning and Evolution: The Cosmology of Jacob Boehme* (New York: Parabola Books, 1991). Reviewed in *Sophia*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1997), pp. 172–180.

June 3, 1997

Dear Father Malachi,

As you no doubt know, I have very much enjoyed our telephone conversation yesterday, and am eagerly looking forward to our meeting, *Deo volente*, in August. And so too, let me add, is my wife Thea.

In the course of our exchange you asked a profound question, to which, as it turns out, I gave an insufficient and indeed misleading reply: what do I mean by the words *spirit* and *spiritual*? I responded that these terms bear reference to the “self-manifestation” of God, that is to say, to the Holy Trinity. What I neglected to note is that the term, so far from being univocal, bears reference also to the *cosmic* manifestation. Thus, in speaking of “the spiritual world” (as opposed to the corporeal or the intermediary), one is referring, not directly to God, but to the central cosmic reflection of the Logos, which can be identified, I believe, with the angelic domain. According to René Guénon⁵ (who, I must admit, has influenced me considerably), this realm may be characterized as universal or “formless” manifestation, in contrast to individual or “formal,” which in turn splits into two distinct degrees: the “subtle” and the “gross,” corresponding to what I have termed the intermediary and the corporeal domains. We are left thus with three cosmic levels: gross, subtle, and “formless” or angelic. Now, these are precisely the “three worlds” of the Vedic tradition, named *bhu*, *bhuvar* and *sva* (once again, in ascending order). It is of interest to note, moreover, that these “worlds” correspond apparently to *Asiah*, *Ietsirah* and *Beriah* of the Kabbalah, whereas the distinction between “formless” and

⁵ A French metaphysician profoundly familiar with the sapiential traditions of the world, whose writings have to some extent revitalized metaphysical thought in the West after centuries of decline. Among his numerous books, it is *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* that most clearly bears witness to the sheer genius of this in many ways enigmatic author.

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“formal” manifestation corresponds, according to Guénon, to the separation of the “upper waters” from the “lower” referred to in Genesis.

As you can well understand, I would love to discuss all this with you at leisure. I come to you as someone eager to improve his own very meager and provisional understanding (if that term is even admissible).

With warm regards and best wishes,
yours faithfully in Christ,

Wolfgang

July 16, 1997

Dear Father Malachi,

First of all let me say that we shall be in New York, God willing, in November, and look forward with what the Germans call “Vorfreude” to the great privilege of meeting you!⁶

I have just finished an exceptionally interesting book entitled *Der Begriff der Zeit bei Franz von Baader*,⁷ which throws light on the question of “origins” we have touched upon. The author, Ferdinand Schumacher, is a priest, and the treatise was accepted as a doctoral dissertation at Münster, which I take to be a hopeful sign. What particularly fascinated me—among other things—is von Baader’s allusion to “eine geistige Christwerdung Jesu”⁸ which supposedly took place at the moment of Adam’s Fall as an act of divine mercy, and gave rise to a primordial tradition von Baader calls “das Urchristentum.” All the most venerable traditions of mankind, he maintains, have sprung from that “Urlehre,” which moreover has been transmitted, above all, in the Kabbalistic teaching, and to a lesser degree in the Hermetic.

The Mosaic books, according to von Baader, presuppose this primordial teaching, and are not comprehensible in their full depth without the data it provides. Now, this would mean that Jacob Boehme did not, in essence, introduce a doctrine of his own, but that he rediscovered and restored a lost tradition: reopened doors that had long been shut. I must admit that von

⁶ It was to be my first—and sad to say, also my last—face-to-face meeting with Malachi Martin.

⁷ Franz von Baader (1765–1841), a Catholic savant, was profoundly influenced by Jacob Boehme, and ranks perhaps as the last authoritative representative of a movement, initiated by Pico de la Mirandola (1463–1492), known as Christian Kabbalah. On this subject I refer to “The Wisdom of Christian Kabbalah” in *Christian Gnosis*.

⁸ This virtually untranslatable expression refers to a spiritual manifestation of Christ that is tantamount to Malachi Martin’s “pre-Christian Christological knowledge.”

Enter Jacob Boehme

Baader's thought—which Ferdinand Schumacher has very perceptively disengaged from a mass of almost unreadable text—appeals to me strongly. But let me reserve final judgment till I have had a chance to hear your views.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Wolfgang

October 23, 1997

My dear Wolfgang,

This is a letter I planned to write to you several months ago. But something happened to me that never happened before. I cannot put it into one word or sentence. But I can express it within the liberty of an unpremeditated letter inspired by what did occur. I have no sense that I am exaggerating when I state that your letters and your book *The Quantum Enigma* together with the sources you opened up to me (Boehme, Guénon, *et al*) constituted a providential source of understanding—the understanding that precisely I had been prepared for (sorry about that proposition ending the sentence!). I must not forget to mention the key role played in this (for me momentous) step by that lecture of yours on “Bell’s Theorem and the Perennial Ontology.”

Here is the simplest way in which I can tell you what has happened.

Under the stimulus of your April 29 letter, I obtained Niclescu’s *Science, Meaning and Evolution*. Since then I have been plunged into understanding Boehme’s doctrine. Yes, he did Christianize the ancient Hermetic wisdom, the pre-Christian Christological knowledge. And his doctrine about the genuine status of our present cosmos is the best formulation of a view I have had since I was put through Hebraic studies at the university. Only thus did and does the Genesis story make sense. Incidentally, has anyone—except Isaiah in his mocking dirge for the Son of the Dawn—ever expressed the terrible ontological shipwreck that Lucifer achieved? I have copied out Boehme’s paragraphs for quotation to penitents and to people undergoing both demonic obsession and demonic possession. Boehme expresses such disgust and contempt together with such bitter regret over the spoiling of Lucifer’s original archangelic beauty and excellence. Boehme, by the way, strikes a very authentic note in not calling Lucifer an archangel but a member of the Second Choir of Angels (the Cherubim). The Cherubim are the Keepers of God’s

awesomeness. To humanize what happened, one would say: that almost dreadful awesomeness of God went to Lucifer's head. Hence his revolt.

But, to get back; the next big revelation for me was *The Quantum Enigma*. Please understand where I am, Wolfgang. I know that everything you state is backed up by mathematical formulae. I do not know, I will never know or understand. I claim no progress along that line. What I have derived from *The Quantum Enigma* as well as from your lecture on Bell's Theorem is a very valuable ability to conceptualize what, before this, I intuited and imagined. To use a neologism, you enabled me to ontologize the Creation Narrative in Genesis; I have an intelligible way now of talking about this most fundamental phase of divine Revelation; and that is thanks to you. Of course, I do not understand much—for instance, I have no clarity about that important factor: state vector collapse. Some actual words (*Salniter* in Boehme is an example) escape me. But in spite of my mathematical limits, I have been and am being enriched every day, because now I am plunged—as I said—into these studies.

You have my particular thanks for responding to my question about *spirit* and *spiritual*. The parallels with the Kabbalah and the triple world of the Vedic tradition fit into this picture. I am still inclined to ascribe all such “traces” to the original Hermetic knowledge (Revelation?) which I have always thought of as the pre-Christ Christology. If I do not presuppose this, I find it difficult to account for such wisdom in so many diverse places and sources. Perhaps I am expressing clumsily what von Baader calls “eine geistige Christwerdung Jesu.” Perhaps I must wait for the Beatific Vision in eternity before knowing the answer. But surely the Holy Ghost in putting the Words of Wisdom on the lips of the Virgin in her Mass texts does imply an ancient presence before the corporeal presence. Tied up with that mystery is the mystery of the Incarnation: the generation of Jesus as Logos is surely in ontological but not temporal simultaneity with His generation as Mary's son. I must lay my hands on Schumacher's book, some day.

Finally, I want to touch on the central point of my interest,

Wolfgang, in all this intricate material. I asked in particular about *spirit* and *spiritual*; and I asked this in relationship to our discussion about the three levels and, especially, the middle plateau, as I called it. My interest stems from this: *in fine finali*, after all my studies and all my association with the Papacy, with the Jesuits, with the clergy, with the people who have thronged through my life—I am thinking as much of the thousands of newborn babies and of expiring men and women who have hall-marked my days and nights; after all of that, what now fascinates me is the presence or absence of *supernatural* grace (sanctifying grace). And this, for a very selfish reason: my *only* chance of escaping the limits of my mortality is that grace. What keeps me on the *qui vive*, in this regard, is that this precious thing is totally gratuitous. *Aliis verbis*, the supernatural did invade my cosmos through the Incarnation; it came as totally gratuitous, in no way obliged to enter my cosmos; it came as something alien to my nature in the sense that nothing in my nature or the nature of my cosmos made this invasion inevitable or necessary or even possible—much less probable. Even though it is so gratuitous and alien, I need it—if what I *desire* is to be mine.

You can now gauge how far I am from any really integrated viewpoint. Under the stimulus of your thought and the sources you have opened to me, I now have a solid hope of being able to account rationally for my understanding of the data of faith. When I say *rationaly*, I mean *plusminusive* what Anselm said about *fides quaerens intellectum*. And this puts me in your debt; let me explain.

When we as young Jesuits gave *three* years solely to rational philosophy, I had an experience I shall never forget. The physics lecturer (a dull but good and lazy man) flung books about physics at me, and forced me to study—of all things—crystals. I forget the why and wherefore and even the what. The point was that for a brief nine months I had a vision of reality not afforded me by the instructions in what they called rational philosophy—predominantly Thomism. I caught a mere glimpse of the world you have opened. I was in my twenties.

Enter Jacob Boehme

The point I am making really, Wolfgang, is that all I have learnt and approbated since April comes just when I need it; need, here, is of the spirit. And when I say “spirit,” I am talking about that mysterious entity, this blessed being—triune of course—that loved me so much.

At the same time, I know that in this letter I have used language both exoteric and esoteric. Even before I entered all this, this year, I was *thinking* outside such bounds, especially when trying (Anselmwise) to understand for instance why Lord Jesus could realistically say, at the Last Supper before He died and rose and ascended, “This is My Body...” Or understand His words to Mary Magdalene in the Garden on Easter morn. Or how I can possibly be associated with Him in enacting Calvary at my daily Mass.

There are a thousand and one scintillations of truth opened up to me like precious diamonds in your scripts and your book as well as in your Jacob Boehme that you have become my benefactor under Christ’s providence. All sorts of precious revelations.

I look forward to hearing about your November visit.⁹ In the meantime believe me to be your brother in Christ Jesus and among your enthusiastic students and well-wishers.

Always with blessings,

Malachi

⁹ This refers to our planned meeting with Fr. Martin in New York.

